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Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council unanimously asks Secretary-General to send Special Representative to Liberia; imposes arms embargo on Liberia except for weapons and military equipment used by peace-keeping forces of Economic Community of West African States.

+ Head of United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia vows that elections next May will not be impeded by remaining armed forces of four Cambodian factions.

+ In Angola, United Nations senior officials pursue efforts to ensure cease-fire and to assist the two parties in returning to negotiating table.

+ Assistant Secretary-General Richard Foran assumes coordination responsibilities for inter-agency humanitarian programme in Iraq; implementation of Plan of Action stepped up, following signing of Memorandum of Understanding.

+ In Second Committee debate on Chernobyl accident, several speakers criticize United Nations handling of the issue, calling for better implementation of programmes to mitigate its effects.

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The Security Council, concerned at the intensified fighting in Liberia threatening to spread to other nations, this evening asked the Secretary-General to dispatch urgently a Special Representative to that country to evaluate the situation and to report his recommendations to the Council as soon as possible.

By its unanimous resolution, the Council also called on States, for the purposes of establishing peace and security in Liberia, to immediately implement a general and complete arms embargo to that country. The Council decided to exempt from the embargo weapons and military equipment used by the peace-keeping forces of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

(more)

Condemning the violation of the cease-fire of 28 November 1990 and the continuing attacks against the ECOWAS peace-keeping forces in Liberia, the Council asked the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of its resolution as soon as possible.

The Council convened at the request of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Foreign Minister of Liberia.

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The elections next May in Cambodia would not be impeded by the remaining armed forces of the four Cambodian factions, which the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) had not been able to disarm and dismantle, head of UNTAC Yasushi Akashi vowed today.

Prompted by reports of a series of incidents over the last few days, Mr. Akashi issued a statement in Cambodia saying it was obvious that a free and fair election could not be held in circumstances of threats on people's lives, liberty and personnal security for attempting to exercise their political rights. He strongly reaffirmed UNTAC's "full commitment to the creation and maintenance of a neutral political environment, a sine qua non condition for holding free and fair elections". He strongly called upon the factions, in the meantime, to exercise strict control over their armed forces and take effective measures to stop all forms of intimidation, harrashment or killing of the civilian population. Mr. Akashi said he had already issued a call for maximum military restraint, and that he was confident that the Security Council would endorse that call.

In view of the recent incidents of politically-related violence, UNTAC would intensify its efforts to see that law and order was maintained effectively and impartially. In creating a neutral political environment, UNTAC would ensure the freedom of all Cambodians, with regard to freedom from intimidation, freedom of party affiliation, and freedom of action for political parties. Mr. Akashi said he would spare no effort to create and maintain the neutral political environment required for the holding of free and fair elections.

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In Angola, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for that country, Margaret Anstee, and officials of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNVEM II) are vigorously pursuing efforts to ensure the cease-fire in all parts of the country and to assist the two parties in returning to the negotiating table.

According to a statement issued at Headquarters today, the situation in most parts of the country was calm although tense, with particularly difficult situations existing in some areas. UNAVEM military, police and civilian observers were everywhere promoting discussion and agreement between the Angolan Government and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

During a meeting today with President Dos Santos of Angola, Mss Anstee informed him that the leader of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), Jonas Savimbi, had accepted the results of the elections of 29 and 30 September. Mr. Savimbi had also set forth UNITA's views about greater involvement of the United Nations in the peace-keeping process in Angola, the statement said.

The future involvement of the United Nations, which the Angolan Government has agreed should be extended and amplified, must be the subject of a formal request, based on consensus between the two parties, so that the Secretary-General can make firm recommendations to the Security Council before the present mandate ends on 30 November.

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Assistant Secretary-General Richard Foran has arrived in Baghdad to assume overall coordination responsibilities for the inter-agency humanitarian programme in Iraq. According to a report from the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO), humanitarian relief has been stepped up since the signing three weeks ago of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Iraq and the United Nations and agreement on a new Plan of Action.

The donor community, UNDRO reports, has responded positively to the financial requirements of the Plan of Action. Its implementation has also been facilitated by the issuance of new visas for United Nations and Non-Governmental organization personnel, as well as for 89 new United Nations guards, who arrived in Iraq on 11 November.

These staff have been deployed throughout northern Iraq to begin putting the Plan into practice. Orders have been placed for food supplies and kerosene and deliveries of initial commodities were expected to begin today. The Government of Iraq has advised that goods on trucks travelling to the north will be off-loaded before entering non-government controlled areas. The supplies will then be re-loaded onto trucks provided from the Kurdish areas, to continue the journey.

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A number of countries this morning expressed dissatisfaction with the way the United Nations was dealing with the effects of the Chernobyl disaster. Addressing the Second Committee (Economic and Financial) on the issue, the representative of Belarus said the Organization's huge potential, its authority and experience in studying, mitigating and alleviating the consequences of the disaster had not been employed to the full. The coordination of activities at different levels both outside and within the Organization had to be strengthened.

The Russian Federation representative, depicting the accident as the worst result of scientific and technological progress, also faulted the results achieved so far by the United Nations. He called for the adoption by

the General Assembly of a resolution on Chernobyl, to enhance efforts to overcome the catastrophe and ensure that existing programmes were implemented.

The United Kingdom representative, speaking on behalf of the European Community, noted that the original United Nations plan to help deal with the aftermath of the disaster had been estimated to cost $646.5 million, but only $1 million had been pledged. That poor response had been a manifestation of the lack of coordination between the activities of the United Nations system and those of regional and other organizations such as the European Community.

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